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CURTIS W. REESE, *Editor*

CONTRIBUTORS

Philleo Nash: Formerly, Advisor on Race Relations to President Truman.

Ben Richardson: Minister of All Souls' Church, Chicago.

Wallace W. Robbins: President of The Meadville Theological School, Chicago.

Helen Rosenfels: Board member and Treasurer of Abraham Lincoln Centre.

Lea D. Taylor: Head Resident of Chicago Commons, Chicago.

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THE FIELD

"The world is my country, to do good is my Religion"

Lysistrata

Aristophanes' classic comedy, *Lysistrata,* has been intercepted in the mail by the Post Office Department as obscene. The Post Office last August refused delivery of a rare edition copy of the Greek classic mailed to Mr. Harry A. Levinson, a Beverly Hills rare book dealer, by the Hammersmith Book Shop in London. The translation is by Jack Lindsay, Australian author and poet, and the illustrations are by Norman Lindsay, the famous Australian artist.

The Solicitor of the Post Office Department has taken the position that *Lysistrata* was "plainly obscene, lewd, and lascivious in character," and that it was "well-calculated to deprave the morals of persons reading same and almost equally certain to arouse libidinous thoughts in the minds of the average normal reader." The Solicitor also claimed that the effect of the book "was intensified and heightened by the indecent and lascivious character of the illustrations" by the artist Norman Lindsay. It is on this basis that the Post Office has refused to deliver the book to Mr. Levinson despite the latter's protest that the book is "one of the greatest classics of Greek comedy" and that if the Postmaster were to ban *Lysistrata* from the mails he "might as well prohibit the Bible and Shakespeare."

The American Civil Liberties Union has taken an interest in this unusual case and one of its cooperating attorneys, Mr. Edward de Grazia, will represent the Beverly Hills bookseller. Mr. de Grazia stated that he will seek an injunction against the Postmaster General to compel him to deliver the book, and will charge that the statute giving the Postmaster General sole discretion and power to ban the circulation through the mails of any literature conceived by him to be obscene, is unconstitutional. The statute under which the Postmaster General acted to bar *Lysistrata* from the mails will be challenged as an unlawful prior restraint on the freedom of the press, in violation of the First Amendment.

—*ACLU Bulletin.*